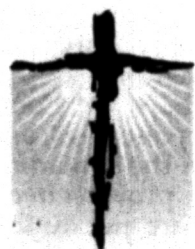


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BAPTISTS

Olympics bringing scrutiny to China

WASHINGTON (BP) —The U.S. House of Representatives and President Bush have signaled to China's Communist regime its violations of religious liberty and other human rights will not be forgotten as the August 8 opening of the Summer Olympics in Beijing nears.

The House voted 419-1 in support of a resolution calling on China to end its human rights abuses before the Olympics. That July 30 vote by the House followed by a day a White House meeting Bush had with five Chinese freedom advocates. Both actions received strong criticism from China's Foreign Ministry.

With Republican Rep. Ron Paul of Texas the sole opponent, the House measure urged Beijing to take numerous, immediate steps to correct its human rights record. The resolution included calls not only for a halt to the government's abuses of its citizens' human rights, including its coercive, one-child population control policy, but its support for the repressive regimes of Sudan and Burma. It also urged the release of prisoners of conscience. It said China should take these actions so the Olympics will occur "in an atmosphere that honors the Olympic traditions of freedom and openness."

The House resolution also called on Bush to take specific steps, including giving speeches on China's human rights record before he leaves the United States for the opening ceremonies and while in Beijing.

China's role as host of the Olympics has not produced greater freedom, as was claimed when the games were awarded to Beijing, but greater oppression, some House members said during floor speeches before the vote.

"Tragically but predictably, the Olympics have been the occasion of a massive crack-



DRESS REHEARSAL — Tibetan performers rehearse for the Beijing Olympic Games in front of the National Stadium, also known as the Bird's Nest. (AFP PHOTO/TEH Eng Koon)

down designed to silence and put beyond reach all those Chinese whose views differ from the government line," Rep. Chris Smith, R.-N.J., told colleagues. "For so many brave Chinese men and women, for the Tibetans, many of them Buddhist monks and nuns, for members of Falun Gong, Chinese Christians, Uighur Muslims, democracy and labor activists and others, this has been a terrible summer, not in spite of but precisely because of the Olympic Games."

Smith had joined Reps. Frank Wolf (R.-Va.) and Jim McGovern (D.-Mass.) in a July 24 letter to Bush requesting he meet with Chinese human rights and

religious freedom leaders before his trip to China. The president responded by meeting July 29 with the five people the congressmen had recommended to him.

After the meeting in the White House residence, Press Secretary Dana Perino said in a written statement Bush told his Chinese guests "he will carry the message of freedom" on his trip to Beijing, as he has in the past in speaking with China's leaders. "He told the activists that engagement with Chinese leaders gives him an opportunity to make the United States' position clear — human rights and religious freedom should not be denied to anyone," she said.

While in Beijing, Bush plans to attend a worship service in a Chinese church and make a statement afterward, China Aid Association President Bob Fu told Baptist Press. A leading advocate for the persecuted church, Fu is one of the freedom activists who met with the president.

A member of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) told BP the White House meeting was important but not sufficient.

It is "the first step," Nina Shea said after a July 30 news conference in the Capitol on China's human rights record, "but it's not enough. President Bush needs to raise these issues in a very public way in China, because China more than anything wants to be seen as a world power, and the free world has to firmly signal that human rights repression, religious persecution is disqualifying for any government to be a world leader. China is developing economically, but it is not opening up politically..."

Fast facts about the Olympic's host nation

BEIJING (BP) —Following are several basic facts about China:

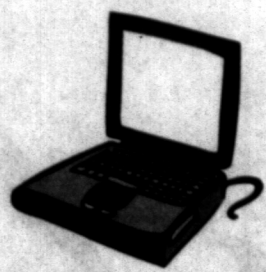
- Name of Country: People's Republic of China
- Capital city: Beijing
- Size: About 3.7 million square miles
- Population: 1.3 billion
- Number of people added to China's population every minute: 24
- Number of cities with more than one million people: 223
- Life expectancy: 72.88 years
- Ethnic groups: Han Chinese,

91.9%; Zhuang, Manchu, Hui, Miao, Uygur, Yi, Mongolian, Tibetan, Buyi, Korean and other, 8.1%

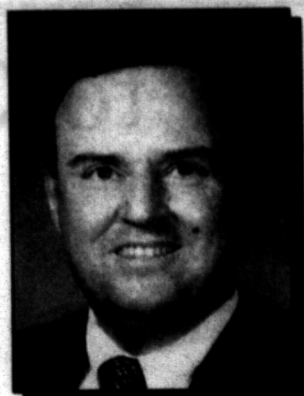
- Language: 70% speak Mandarin; others speak dialects or sub-dialects
- Literacy: 90.9%
- Religions: Officially atheist; Taoism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, ancestor worship, shamanism
- Number of people who will die in China this year without hearing about Jesus: 7.4 million

- Terrain: Plains, deltas and hills in east; mountains, high plateaus and deserts in west
- Climate: Tropical in south to subarctic in north
- Government: Communist party-led state
- President: Hu Jintao
- Branches of government: Executive (president, vice president, State Council, premier. Legislative (unicameral National People's Congress). Judicial (Supreme People's Court)
- Political parties: Chinese

- Communist Party, 70.8 million members; eight minor parties under communist supervision
- Suffrage: Universal at 18
- Gross Domestic Product (2006): \$2.68 trillion
- Work force (2006) 798 million; Agriculture and forestry 45%; industry two percent; services 31%
- Currency: Yuan
- Exchange rate in Yuan per U.S. dollar: 6.99 (May 2008)
- Telephone country code: 86
- Internet country code: .cn



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Worldwide scam on the World Wide Web

Beloved in christ, Calvary Greetings in the Name of our lord Jesus Christ, I have been briefed to contact you because of passion for humanity and sympathy for people with just causes. I am a new Christian convert, suffering from long time cancer.

From all indications my condition is really deteriorating and it is quite obvious that I won't live more than six months. It has defied all forms of medical treatment, and right now I have only about a few months to live, according to medical experts. I have not particularly lived my life so well, as I never really cared for anything but my business. Though I am very rich, But now I regret all this as I now know that there is more to life than just wanting to have or make all the money in the world.

I want God to be merciful to me and accept my soul so, I have decided to give alms to charity organizations and those in Need, as I want this to be one of the last good deeds I do on earth. So far, Now that my health has deteriorated so badly, I cannot do this myself anymore. The last of my money which only my Attorney knows of is the huge cash deposit of Five Million United

States Dollars (\$5 000, 000.00) that I have with an Asset Management / Vaulting Company Abroad. I will want you to help me collect this deposit. I am willing! to donate this 5 million U.S. dollars to you for the less privilege and for practical Christian service and concern.

And upon my instruction, my attorney, who presently is in Accra Ghana distributing relief materials to victims and an application for the Transfer of the money in your name. Lastly, I honestly pray that this money when it get to your hand will be used for the said purpose. So if you know that you will use this fund honestly for things that will glorify God's name and

purpose of God's work, then do urgently contact me back and the details will be given to you on how you will be able to receive the fund.

Anyone with a computer and an e-mail address has likely received at least one such plaintive message lately — if not a whole slew of them. At The Baptist Record, the count for just this year is several hundred such messages.

The names and reply addresses may be different, but the point is always the same: The writer is a rich but dying new Christian, always overseas, seeking to give away his fortune to someone who will use it properly to ensure his entrance into heaven. All that need be done is to contact the writer for instructions on how to transfer the money.

If the recipient does reply, he/she is usually told to withdraw a substantial sum of money from their own bank account and send it to the writer, so that the writer's money can be freed up. Then, according to the writer, all of the recipient's money plus the newfound fortune will be sent back to the recipient.

It all sounds too good to be true, and it is. These are Internet scams of the highest order.

The scheme relies on convincing a willing victim, who has demonstrated a 'propensity for larceny' by responding to the invitation, to send money to the author of the letter in Nigeria in several installments of increasing amounts for a variety of reasons," reports the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), referring to a particular scam that originates in the African nation of Nigeria.

"Payment of taxes, bribes to government officials, and legal fees are often described in great detail with the promise that all expenses will be reimbursed as

soon as the funds are spirited out of Nigeria. In actuality, the millions of dollars do not exist and the victim eventually ends up with nothing but loss," the FBI states.

"Once the victim stops sending money, the perpetrators have been known to use the personal information and checks that they received to impersonate the victim, draining bank accounts and credit card balances until the victim's assets are taken in their entirety. While such an invitation impresses most law-abiding citizens as a laughable hoax, millions of dollars in losses are caused by these schemes annually," the FBI warns.

There are many variations on this Internet scam, some involving the expressed desire to plant new churches, donate large sums to a seminary, or provide Bibles to people groups who have none. It's hard to believe folks fall for such a pitch but, according to the FBI, it happens often.

It's particularly egregious when Southern Baptists fall prey to such artifice, because we already have the best system in the Protestant world to fund such mission endeavors. We don't need to respond to scams foisted on us in the Name of the Lord to accomplish our duty under the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

Southern Baptists have the Cooperative Program, the missions offerings, and many other ways to support the spreading of the Gospel that have been proven effective and cost-efficient. If there are any doubts about whether a program is worthy of our involvement — spiritually as well as financially — we must be willing to do the research and ask the hard questions to be sure the cause is legitimate.

Don't waste your money. Don't waste the Lord's money. Don't respond to these scams. Do the right thing.

This August, like the past 11 Augusts, Sturgis (Miss.) will be saturated with bikes and bikers — and this August, like the past several Augusts, hundreds of committed Christians will be working to saturate the gathering with the Gospel.

We need your help. Please make plans to be in Sturgis on August 15-16 and participate in the Sturgis Biker Mission. Literally, tens of thousands of people will be in Sturgis that weekend for the twelfth annual Sturgis South Motorcycle Rally. Don't waste the opportunity to reach them.

The Sturgis Biker Mission represents the partnership of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), Golden Triangle Association, and several local churches to present a Gospel witness during the annual rally. Mission partners see a staggering opportunity to reach the nation through this event.

That's because bikers from all professions and parts of the country come to Sturgis. Many of them are looking for a friendly face, and many of them need Jesus. The Sturgis Biker Mission longs to give them both and to encourage them in a faith that will impact their lives and homes.

GUEST OPINION:



Bikers need Jesus, too

By Russell Mord, pastor
Sturgis Church, Sturgis

For five years now, the MBCB has invested time, money, and the Gospel in this rally. Last year, volunteers from churches around the state and the Southeast helped present the gospel to thousands of bikers in Sturgis. We want to continue the work this year, and we need your prayers and help to get it done.

Last year, volunteers worked a number of different projects in their efforts to reach bikers with the Gospel. At five different locations throughout the rally, Sturgis Biker Mission volunteers gave thirsty visitors free cups or bottles of water accompanied with a Gospel tract. A first aid station, an inflatable slide for children, and a CMA tent were at the mission's main site at Sturgis Church.

Many of the volunteers became engaged in street min-

istry. They walked throughout the rally and distributed free vest pins, tracts, fans (which had an evangelistic message printed on them), and biker New Testaments to everyone who would accept the materials.

By early afternoon Saturday, the rally was obviously saturated with the Gospel. Few visitors had not received any of the materials. Some received the Lord.

This year's effort will be very similar, and we welcome everyone who will come. There are many ways you can join in the work. In fact, the ministry you can accomplish in Sturgis is only limited by God's word and your own imagination.

Whether you serve as an individual or as part of a group, you can be involved in one-on-one witnessing encounters with bikers and bike enthusiasts or

in a project of some sort, and your group can do all kinds of projects from a free bike wash to first aid to children's games to prayer ministry to whatever.

All that's really necessary is that you show Jesus to people.

If you want to do that, I beg you to come share in the blessing by sharing Christ with thousands of people. We are recruiting volunteers now to come and do just that. Would you come and be part of this effort?

A hospitality center for bikers will be located on the Sturgis Church lot on Main Street (Highway 12). There will be many opportunities to meet people and share Christ. New Testaments, tracts, vest pins and other materials will be provided.

Materials will be at Sturgis Church. An orientation meeting will be at 7 p.m. on Thursday, August 14. There will also be a continuously running orientation video in the church's fellowship hall on Friday afternoon and all day Saturday.

For more information on joining this work, email rmord@hotmail.com. You may also call (662) 312-3788. You may learn more about the bike rally itself at www.sturgismsrally.com.

Let us answer your questions and help you begin planning your work.

GuideStone trustees look to long-range plan

BOSTON (BP) — GuideStone Financial Resources President O.S. Hawkins updated trustees on the completion of initiatives related to GuideStone 90, the first phase of GuideStone's long-range plan, during their July 28-29 meeting in Boston.

Trustees also heard an update on GuideStone's preparations to launch its property and casualty insurance products and approved a business plan that will enable the organization to offer specific financial advice to its participants.

Hawkins said each element of GuideStone 90, which was completed in June, "is designed to undergird our vision statement to honor the Lord by being a lifelong partner in enhancing the financial security of our participants."

The first phase of the long-range plan ran from 2005-08.

The second phase, GuideStone 95, will run from 2008-13 and the final phase, GuideStone 100, encompassing 2013-18, will lead into GuideStone's centennial year.

Initiatives that grew out of GuideStone 90 included steps to provide competitive medical plan alternatives for participants.

"Over the past few years, GuideStone's health plan participants have benefited from our commitment to continue to provide affordable and flexible health-care products while maintaining our ministry focus," Hawkins said. "Since 2003, health plan premiums nationwide have increased by an average of 52%. During this same period, net enrollment in GuideStone's medical plans has increased by over 5,400, a 21.7% increase. By maximizing Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) network discounts, (improving) pharmacy pricing, and offering a variety of lower premium plans, average premiums paid by GuideStone

participants decreased by 13.6% during this same period, from \$600 in 2003 to \$518 in 2008."

Even after taking into account out-of-pocket medical expenses, the average GuideStone participant's total costs — premium plus out-of-pocket — decreased between 2003 and 2008. Average total costs were as high as \$773 per month in 2004. Estimates show that average costs for 2008 will be \$661 per month, a decrease of 14.5%.

GuideStone officials have noted that the national medical trend has continued to outpace inflation during the past five years, and health-care medical coverage generally has become more expensive for employers and individuals. Health-care claims are cyclical, according to GuideStone officials, and it appears the cycle is at the steepest part of the claims curve.

Industry analysts expect claim costs to continue with double-digit increases in 2008 and 2009 for health-care plans utilizing Preferred Provider Organizations such as GuideStone's.

Although GuideStone's rate action for 2009 will not be determined until late summer or early fall, churches that have budget deadlines before the new rates are released would be prudent to assume rate increases of at least 15% or higher due to nationwide medical inflation, according to GuideStone officials.

GuideStone advises that churches or individuals wishing to minimize the impact of these increased rates on their 2009 budgets should consider the full range of GuideStone health plans, including higher deductible plan options that can save money on monthly rates.

Among other facets of GuideStone 90, all full-time students at the six Southern Baptist seminaries are now eligible to receive a free \$10,000 life benefit.

"We want to have a lifelong partnership with seminary students," Hawkins said. "Many of these students are unable to afford even basic protection for their family. This is just one way we can help to enhance their financial security."

Touching on GuideStone's financial assistance ministry, Hawkins reported, "Earlier this year, we approved expanded guidelines that enable more of our retired pastors or their widows to qualify for financial assistance. Additionally, we have doubled the amount of monthly assistance to our most needy recipients. In some cases, this now amounts to as much as \$530 per month."

In 1997, the Adopt An Annuitant, now called Mission:Dignity, benefit was \$50 per month. Now it is as much as \$530 per month for the neediest recipients.

The launch of the MyDestination Funds was another facet of GuideStone 90. Hawkins explained that the five registered date target funds "are managed to specific retirement dates and may be a suitable solution for investors of all ages looking to create or maintain a diversified, age-appropriate retirement choice in a single fund."

Each of the MyDestination Funds is a diversified "fund-of-funds" that has an asset allocation that gradually becomes more conservative as an investor approaches retirement.

Chief Operating Officer John R. Jones, in his report to trustees, reviewed objectives and initiatives planned for GuideStone 95 and GuideStone 100. GuideStone 95 objectives include the launch of new products and services for GuideStone participants as well as churches and institutions.

Later this fall, property and casualty insurance will become available to churches and ministry organizations served by GuideStone. Additionally, trustees took action to approve a business plan that will enable GuideStone to provide specific financial advice to its participants.

Douglas D. Day, executive officer for insurance solutions and

services, reported on GuideStone's progress in launching its property and casualty insurance products later this fall.

"We are excited and grateful for the opportunity to make available risk management products to churches and ministry organizations that will provide affordable insurance coverage as well as comprehensive educational materials," Day said. "We are finalizing arrangements with strategic partners to begin making these new products available by the third quarter of this year."

Patty A. Weiland, executive officer for financial services and solutions, recapped for trustees the business plan that will enable GuideStone to provide financial advice to participants.

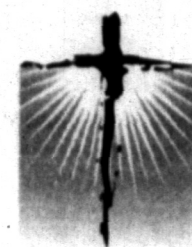
"This new service will help us to answer the most often asked questions that come from participants. How should my retirement account be invested? How much should I be saving for retirement? Am I on track to meet my financial goals? Do I need to make adjustments to future goals?" Weiland said.

Financial advice will consist of fund-specific investment advice related to GuideStone's proprietary investment funds that are available to participants in GuideStone's retirement plans. In addition to the investment fund advice, a retirement income gap analysis also will be available to assist participants in knowing how much more they may need to save in order to reach their retirement income goal.

Project teams are working to put all of the elements in place for a launch of the new service during the first half of 2009.

Hawkins told the trustees, "Every decision we make as trustees and staff must be considered in terms of our vision statement which says, 'We exist to honor the Lord by being a lifelong partner with our participants in enhancing their financial security.' In that statement we find our motivation — to honor the Lord."

We find our message — to be a lifelong partner and we have our mandate — to enhance the financial security of our participants."



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE SECOND
FRONT PAGE

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LifeWay makes cuts

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — LifeWay Christian Resources, one of the world's largest providers of Christian products and services, announced Aug. 1 that it is reducing its workforce by approximately five percent and cutting expenses in other parts of its operations. LifeWay, a religious nonprofit organization related to the Southern Baptist Convention, does not receive direct financial support from the denomination and is making the move in response to the downturn the U.S. economy has been experiencing, according to a statement released by the organization. Employees whose positions have been eliminated will receive severance pay, some benefits, and outplacement services, the statement said. In addition, some of those employees will be able to take advantage of retirement benefits. Although the economic downturn that began last fall has affected most sectors of the economy, "LifeWay is weathering the storm better than many other Christian ministries," LifeWay President Thom S. Rainer pointed out. "LifeWay is debt free and in excellent financial condition. Although we are adjusting our priorities and scaling back some operations, we are well positioned to continue our ministry to people and churches across the nation and around the world." The statement said Rainer asked LifeWay employees to join him in prayer for those leaving the organization, as well as for continuing employees. "I especially covet your prayers for me and those in leadership at LifeWay," he wrote. "We desire to know and do the will of God — today,

Looking back

10 years ago

The "interim" in the title of William Carey College interim president Larry W. Kennedy is removed Aug. 6 by the school's board of trustees, who named him permanently to head the Hattiesburg-based school.

20 years ago

A Mississippi flag flies over a church in Ada, Ohio, as a group of 20 workers from Alcorn Association install duct work, conduit, and sheetrock in a new church building. Baptists from Alabama and Kentucky put up the framing and roof earlier.

50 years ago

Mississippi Baptists, in an effort to better serve the temperance and moral cause in the state, have developed the Mississippi Baptist Temperance and Moral Program which is being coordinated through the Mississippi Church Council for Alcohol Education.

BITTER WEEDS

It was spring and I had passed by some fields and pastures just filled with bitter weeds. I was talking with a man who owned some of the fields and he was telling me that they had a difficult time controlling the bitter weeds in those areas. As we talked about the bitter weeds, a flood of youthful memories rushed through my mind. I recognize that a lot of adults and even more children and youth may not even know what bitter weeds are. They are plants with little yellow flowers that can just spring up overnight. They are bitter and apparently spread like crazy. I know this first of all because as a kid I was encouraged by someone to bite down on the weed and see. I did and now I can testify to you that it is bitter. The other reason I know about the bitterness of the bitter weed is that in years long ago we sometimes got milk not from the big plants that processed it but from neighbors that milked cows. Occasionally and especially during the springtime the cows would get out of the designated pastures into an area that was filled with fresh grown bitter weeds. Of course, the milk was bitter and we could not drink it because of its bitterness.

As I looked upon, talked about, and then wandered around through old filing cabinets in my brain, I reflected on so much of life's bitterness. Bitter weeds are not around all year. I have only tasted the little budded flowers and plants a few times, but I thought how vivid they are in my memory. That is the way it is with the bitter things of life. They come and they have long since been gone, maybe for decades, but the taste, the sound, the smell, and the feel is all still right there. The Scripture says that we need to be aware, for growing in our hearts can be a root of bitterness.

Bitter weeds can spring up in your life and I can assure you they can spread to every nook and cranny, every area, every thought, and every emotion of your life. How many people do you know who have had a bitter weed experience that became the defining characteristic of their life? Everything else that happened, every other feeling, decision, relationship, dream, success, or failure was marked by the bitter weed experience. It is certainly well worth pointing out that everyone can grow a crop of bitter weeds just overnight. No one that I know is immune.

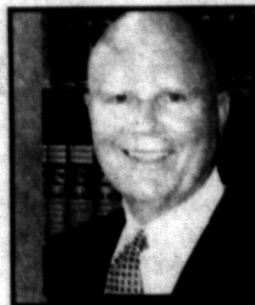
What are you going to do when bitter weeds spring up all around you? How are you going to deal with them?

Some folks nurture them. Honestly, some people treat their hurts and bitter experiences of the past as though they are prized family pets. They love to parade them out in front of people, especially someone

who is new in their circle of friends and interests so that they can understand just how much they have been hurt. Maybe they can find a new ally in their painful pity parties. It is amazing to watch and it is almost incomprehensible but true that some people pet, nourish, nurse, and stay nuzzled up close to bitterness that is decades old.

I have also noticed that people who nurture their bitter experiences usually see those experiences grow to be much larger and more powerful than they were at the moment. How many times have you seen someone have an experience that was just a momentary passing kind of a quip of an event that was hardly given a thought, but walking away, they begin to process, reprocess, analyze, and evaluate to the point that they feel like something sinister was done toward them? They begin to feel hurt. They continue to think about it, maybe discuss it with others who agree with their assessment, and it becomes larger and larger until soon it looms as a huge, angry mountain on the landscape of their life. You keep feeding on bitter weeds in your life and you will soon find out that is all that you have around you.

Other people neglect their bitter weeds. These are the folks who feel that, if you ignore something hard enough, long enough, and intentionally enough, it will go away. Now for sure there are times and events where you ought to keep your mouth shut, turn, and walk away. I understand that. It seems as though genuine godly wisdom is the only way to know when you need to say or do something or when you need to leave it unsaid. I so often think of the wisdom that came from an old country preacher who told me years ago that sometimes the more you stir a stink the stinkier it gets. On the other hand, ignoring contamination or walking away from pollution does not mean things will get better. You cannot go through life as a mindless Pollyanna exercising your ability to ignore the hurts



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

and hope for life to be better tomorrow. It may not happen.

I would suggest to you that long-term the most effective thing to do repeatedly is to annihilate the bitter weed crop. Hebrews 12:15 says, "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God that any root of bitterness springing up trouble you and thereby many be defiled." That verse of Scripture actually follows this instruction. "Follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). In other words, we are commanded to look to the Lord and in so doing do the right thing. We are to do the right thing with the right attitude. God's marvelous grace and abiding guidance in our lives will keep us from experiencing roots of bitterness taking hold.

There is no question that we must stay diligent or vigilant. There is no question that we must trust implicitly in the care and guidance of God, or life's pastures of bitterness will entrap us. How do you deal with it?

First, if possible, do not let bitter things get planted in your life. I know that sometimes you do not have any control over it, but sometimes you may.

The second thing you can do is to prepare the ground of your life and heart so that it will not be receptive to bitter weeds. I remember years ago when pre-emergent weed killers first came out. Farmers would spray the ground and plow it before planting their crops so that the chemicals would kill the weeds. It was a revolutionary day for farmers who wanted to raise crops instead of weeds. Maybe there is a weed killer, a spiritual herbicide that we could ask God to spray on our hearts so that no plant would spring up and no root would shoot down bringing bitterness in our lives. Maybe there is a work of God or combination of God's powerful chemicals like grace, mercy, gentleness, and kindness that will make a difference in the soil of our hearts so it will not grow the bad stuff.

A third thing that can be done when something happens and a root of bitterness begins to take hold in our lives is to simply stop, ask God to lift it out completely, discard it, and do not go back and pick it up.

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.



YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

CLASSIFIED ADS

ALOMA BAPTIST CHURCH IS searching for a minister to families with children to facilitate ministry to children from birth through age 12. And to equip families to become spiritual nurturers. Preferred qualifications: minimum Bachelors and 2 years experience. Please send resumes to: Discipleship Ministries, 1815 SR 436, Winter Park, FL 32792. Or email nmillican@alomachurch.org.

SEBREN'S SIDING, JACKSON, Christian owned. All home improvements, vinyl siding, windows, metal and shingle roofs, patio covers, screen and glass rooms. 601-992-2092, Don & Rita Sebren, owners.

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PERMA-COAT SIDING & REMODELING: vinyl siding, sunrooms, metal roofs, house washing, patio covers and much more. Call James Thompson at 601-850-9620 or 601-932-3979.

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CHURCH PEW UPHOLSTERY, FREE estimates. Davis Upholstery, Quitman, Miss., phone 601-776-6617.

CONDO IN GATLINBURG FOR RENT: 2 bedrm, 2 bath, full kitchen. Walking distance to parkway, \$70.00/night. Call for information 281-855-4469 or 832-922-0101/0141. Email pdw4760@att.net.

CONCRETE SLABS. WESTBROOK Construction, specializing in form and finishing concrete for residential and commercial jobs; licensed, bonded; church discounts offered. Call 601-842-9976 or 601-213-8026 for free estimate.

DISCOUNT BAPTISTRIES & STEEPLES. Baptist murals, heaters, lighting, seating, wall crosses, pew cushions, kinkiglas, carpet, signs. Church Supply Company of Texas, 800-728-8291.

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, Alexandria, Louisiana, seeking senior high/college students minister to lead progressive student ministry. Must have passion for students & their families: ability to plan & coordinate 5011 Jackson Street, Alexandria, LA 71303 or brooks@calvarynet.net.

A FULL-TIME POSITION AVAILABLE for Associate Pastor of Worship and Youth at a traditional south Alabama congregation. Desiring Worship Leader (Music/Choirs) for more blended service and aggressive youth leadership. Education and experience desired. AM worship attendance: 220. Send resume to Little Escambia Baptist Church, P. O. Box 291, Flomaton, AL 36441 or Email littleescambia@earthlink.net.

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MS POSITIONS

PELAHATCHIE BAPTIST CHURCH IS seeking a part-time Minister of Music for Worship Services, Adult, youth, and children's choirs. Please forward resume to the Pelahatchie Baptist Church, search committee, P. O. Box 876, Pelahatchie, MS 39145, attn: Due McKinion. Email: due@rankincounty.org.

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

August 7, 2008

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

Senior Adult Retreat IV

September 25-26 at FBC - McComb

Speaker: Sonny Adkins

Former state evangelism director

Choirs:

25th - FBC Senior Adult Choir, Pascagoula

26th - Lamar County Association Choir

Gatherings:

25th - "Professor Cornpone"

Joseph Harris, Ellisville

26th - Piano/organ duet

Irene Martin and Ed Sudduth

For info: 601-292-3373 or gshows@MBCB.org

STATE HANDBELL LEADERSHIP SEMINAR

August 15-16, 2008

McLaurin Heights BC, Pearl

Led by the State Handbell Committee

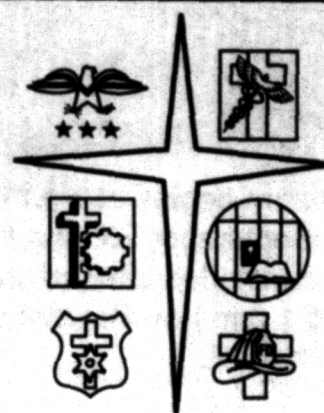
NOTE DATE CHANGE!



THIS SEMINAR IS DESIGNED TO ASSIST:

- Handbell leaders, potential leaders
- Anyone desiring to begin a handbell ministry or start new choirs
- Leaders who have a desire to teach handbell skills more effectively

Contact the Church Music Department for more info:
1-800-748-1651, ext. 266, or in Jackson, 601-292-3266.



Mississippi Baptist Chaplains' Association

Fall Training

September 19

Skyroom, MBCB

8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Cost: \$10

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Nathan Barber
Chaplain to Heroes

Barry Click
Pastoral Evangelism:
The Call to Bless
and to Mourn

Duewayne Tullos
Who is a Hospice
Chaplain?

For more info: Men's Ministry
601-292-3334
1-800-748-1651
cwright@mbcb.org

Mississippi wMu 130th Annual Meeting

August 22-23, Garaywa

(held in conjunction with Missions Leadership Training)

Annual Meeting: 10:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Lunch: 12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Reservations for lunch are required.

For more information, contact Lisa Miller
at 601-292-3317,
1-800-748-1651, ext. 317, or
lmiller@mbcb.org

Called to Love ...

Amazing Grace



wMu Annual
Meeting
Special Guest:
Kay Miller
National WMU
President

Missions Leadership Training (MLT) for the church

(sponsored by MS wMu and Men's Ministry)

3 locations to choose from ...

Missions Leadership Training is for all church staff and missions leaders.

August 15-16, 2008

FBC, Biloxi

as part of ...

"Glorieta on the Gulf"

Registration Fee: \$10

Contact the Gulf Coast Association
for a registration form: 228-832-4311

August 22-23, 2008

Garaywa Camp and
Conference Center

including

wMu Annual Meeting

Registration Deadline for housing
& meals: 8-8-08

August 26, 2008

Emmanuel BC

Grenada, Miss.

6 p.m. - 9 p.m.

No registration required



Aug. 24
6 p.m.

FBC, Pascagoula

Special Ministries Retreat

**September 26-27
Garaywa, Clinton, Miss.**

**FOR EXCEPTIONAL PERSONS 12 YRS. AND OLDER, THEIR
PASTORS/MINISTERS, PARENTS, TEACHERS OR FRIENDS.**

One adult counselor for every five campers of the same sex.

Bible study, singing, games, movies,
talent show and lots of fun!

Registration begins at 3 p.m. on
Friday, September 26, and the
retreat concludes after lunch
(around 1 p.m.) on Saturday,
September 27.

The cost is \$37.50 per person.
This includes overnight lodging.

Contact Angie Boydston for more information - Call: 601.292.3294 or
1-800-748-1651; E-mail: aboydstun@mbcb.org; Mail: Mississippi Baptist
Convention Board, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205



GA Mother/Daughter Overnights

(GRADES 1-6)

**SEPTEMBER 19-20
OCTOBER 10-11**

\$40 per person



A special time for mothers and their GA daughters (grades 1-6) to share the excitement of missions learning. Activities include worship, campfire, crafts, recreation and a missionary visit. All overnights begin at 5 p.m. on Friday and end at 2 p.m. on Saturday.

Registration Deadlines:

September 5 for September Overnight

September 26 for October Overnight

If space is still available after the deadline date, reservations will be accepted at the cost of \$45 per person. No refunds after the deadline date.

For more info, contact the Mississippi wMu, 601-292-3316 or
1-800-748-1651, ext 316, or kreditt@mbcb.org

GET READY!!! YOUTH MINISTER'S RETREAT

**November 10-12
Lake O'Kana
Louisiana**

**Speakers:
Allen Jackson, NOBTS
Randy Hall, Student Life
Birmingham, Ala.**

For more information,
contact:

Gulf Coast Association
228-832-4311 or
MBCB

Discipleship and Family
Ministry Department
1-800-748-1651, ext. 373
or 601-292-3373

Glorieta on the Gulf

GROWING CHURCHES

The Acts 1:8 Revolution - Transform Our World

AUGUST 15-16

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, BILOXI

RADAY

SEPTEMBER 20, 2008

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE - CLINTON

REGISTRATION

3:00 P.M.

PROGRAM

3:30 P.M.

GAME

6 P.M.

COST: \$6

**BRING YOUR OWN
SACK SUPPER
AND DRINK**

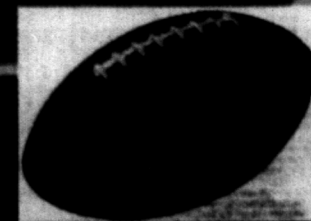
DEADLINE

FOR REGISTRATION
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

QUESTIONS?

DEANNA VAIL AT

(601) 292-3335 OR (800) 748-1651, EXT. 335



2009

BAPTIST DOCTRINE STUDY PREVIEW BRUNCHES

Led by:
Argile Smith
FBC, Biloxi



All scheduled for **9 A.M. - NOON**

Monday, January 26

Main Street BC, Hattiesburg

Tuesday, January 27

Brandon BC, Brandon

Thursday, January 29

FBC, Oxford

Featured Book

VIBRANT CHURCH

**BECOMING A HEALTHY CHURCH
IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

Thom S. Rainer & Daniel L. Akin

Preregistration requested. The \$10 registration fee includes the full brunch and the featured study course book.

For more information, contact the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department, 601-292-3284, 1-800-748-1651, ext. 284, or dbrashier@mbcb.org

37th Annual

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OCTOBER 3-4, 2008

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Angela Hunt**

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FOR INFORMATION:
Contact Communication
Services:
1-800-748-1651, ext. 378
(Miss. only),
or 601-292-3378
or E-mail:
jchen@mbcb.org

PROGRAM PERSONALITIES

BETH ANDREWS

KARY BARTH

MARY BROUSSARD

HOPE FERGUSON

SANDRA FITTS

EVA NELL HUNTER

BILL JONES

PEGGY TACON

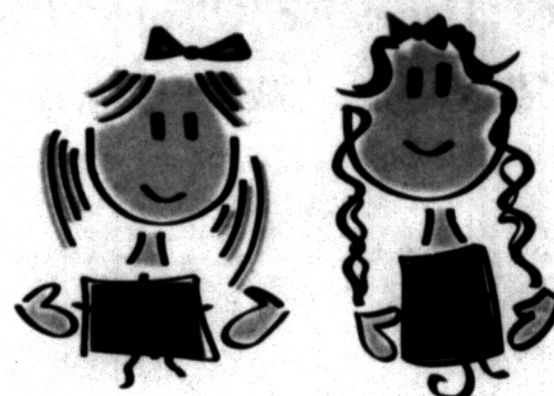


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missions in the future?**



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TODAY to GIVE is
being obedient.

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kingdom finances.



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will provide a **FREE** Children's
Resource Teaching Tool!

South Mississippi

Monday, Sept. 8
Pascagoula
FBC

Central Mississippi

Tuesday, Sept. 9
Brandon
Brandon BC

North Mississippi

Thursday, Sept. 11
Olive Branch
Longview Heights BC

**All Clinics:
6:30 - 8 p.m.**

Bible Drill Clinics

**2008 Leadership Training Classes
For adults who lead Bible Drill**



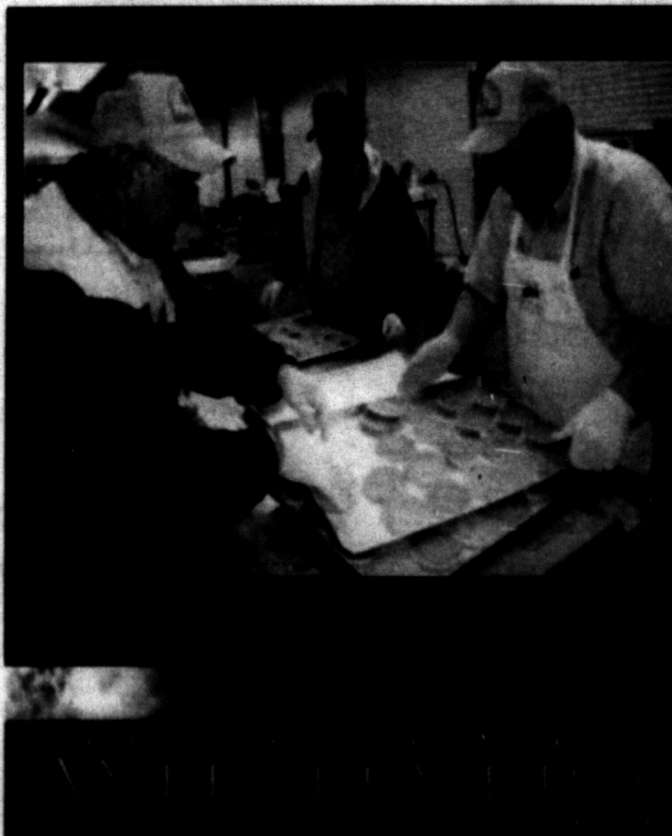
**Children's Leader Class
Don Hicks**
Consultant
D&FM, MBCB*

**Student Leader Class
Steve Jackson**

Pastor, McLaurin Heights BC
Pearl, Miss.



For more information, contact the Discipleship & Family
Ministry Department: 1-800-748-1651, ext. 284,
601-292-3284 or dbrashier@mbcb.org



Your Margaret
Lacey gifts assisted
more than 18,000
volunteers respond
to six disasters last
year. Encourage your
church to support
the disaster missions
offering this fall.

Pray this day for...

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone 601-292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1-800-787-7729 (PRAY)

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name. O most High: to show forth Thy lovingkindness in the morning and Thy faithfulness every night."

Psalm 92:1-2

Leaders F, W and P work with the Lambya people of Malawi. The Lambya have heard about Christ, but have not chosen to follow Him completely. Pray for these three men who live among the Lambya, who understand their ways, asking that they might be strong influences in the entire area where the Lambya are found.

Please pray for the Tonga people who live in the southern part of Mozambique, surrounded by beautiful beaches. Ask God to send someone to work with this people group. Pray that the Tonga people will be open to the gospel when they hear about the beautiful life they can have in Christ.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo's top five unreached people groups are the Yansi, the Ngando, the Ngongo, the Salampasu and the Bunde. Choose one of these groups to focus on each week and fervently pray that God would draw these people's hearts to Himself.

Give thanks to God for calling out a church in the United States to adopt the Yombe people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Pray for other churches to adopt some of the more than 200 different people groups of the DRC.

(1) Professional Certification & Office Skills for Ministry Assistants, Garaywa (P/LD); (2) Pray for the Manyika people who live in central Mozambique. Ask God to prepare the hearts of this people group to hear the Good News that Christ is the only way to heaven. Pray for God to call a laborer to come and work with the Manyika people.

Missions researchers have identified more than 2,000 unreached people groups with populations of 100,000 and greater. Many of the largest people groups have Southern Baptist missionaries working among them. But many of the others have no one. Your prayers can prepare the way for the gospel to be shared among these unengaged peoples.

The Himba people of Namibia are a small people group of approximately 50,000. They are a semi-nomadic people. Pray that they will come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Pray that as they live in an isolated environment, they will be able to see the salvation that Jesus offers as a gift and not as something to destroy their way of life.

The Bahananoa people are a tribal branch of the Sotho people of South Africa. Their population is approximately 612,000. Pray for them to have a chance to hear the gospel message in a way they understand. Pray for willing workers to travel to their area and seek to reach the Bahananoa people. Pray for a church-planting movement among them.

(1) New Staff Day, FBC and the Baptist Building, Jackson (CG); (2) The Manyawa people live in Mozambique. This province is home to many people groups, and the Manyawa are one of those groups who need to know Jesus Christ. Pray that God will send someone to work with the Manyawa, who are open and ready to repent from their sins.

Praise God! Although the remote Kokola people still do not have a missionary from any agency serving among them, M, a Kokola man in Mozambique, is full of the joy of the Lord and the power of the Holy Spirit! He was born again just a few years ago. He shared what he knew of Christ first in his own village, now in surrounding villages.

(1) State Leadership Training for Churches, Central Hills Baptist Retreat, 8th - 9th (MM); (2) Of the more than 260,000 Ndembo Lunda people in the Northwest Province of Zambia, less than 1 percent are Christian. Luke 3:6 (NIV) says that all mankind will see God's salvation. Pray that this will be true of the Ndembo Lunda.

There are approximately 1 million residents of Sekhukhuneland of South Africa. The population is poor, with 25 percent employed as farm laborers. A very small percentage of the people are saved, with 27 percent being unresponsive to the gospel. Pray that the Lord will provide workers for this harvest field.

(1) South Missions Leadership Training, "Glorieta on the Coast," FBC, Biloxi, 15th - 16th (wMu); (2) Growing Churches "Glorieta on the Gulf," FBC, Biloxi, 15th - 16th (D&FM).

There are more than 260,000 Ndembo Lunda people in Zambia where it touches the Congo, and less than 1 percent of them are Christian. Pray that the Ndembo Lunda who meet Jesus will return to their own people and neighborhoods, glorifying and praising God.



OCTOBER

10-3-97
MISS KARISSA YEAGER
Parents: Tommy & Jennifer, Restricted

10-4-01
MISS MICAH WORTHY
Parents: Charlie & Shannon, Western Europe

10-5-90
MISS CARLEY MULLINS
Parents: Frank C. (Charles) & Lynn, Spain

10-8-97
MISS CATHERINE A. HODGINS
Parents: Raymond & Cynthia, South America

10-8-90
MISS MELISSA K. SHEARER
Parents: Kevin & Pamela, South America

10-16-89
MISS RACHEL C
Parents: J & M, Restricted

FOR SECURITY,
cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: Child's name, Parent's name, MBCB wMu MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205

PLEASE NOTE:
Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the wMu.

State Women's Retreat

"Fueled by Faith"
Join us for an imaginary
ISLAND ADVENTURE
that's been designed
especially for you!

October 17-18, 2008

Garaywa

Go to www.mbc.org

Registration Deadline: October 8



Ms. Chocolate



Janie Walters



Becky Brown



Kathy Frady

SPECIAL GUESTS

For additional information,
please contact MS wMu at
800-748-1651, ext. 317;
601-292-3317;
or E-mail Lmiller@mbcb.org

HOUSE TOPS

REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

- Concord Church, Ackerman:** Homecoming and revival, Aug. 10 - 13; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Steve Jordan, speaker; Mary Jordon and Lamar Blaine, music; Roger Griffith, pastor.
- Golden Central Church, Golden:** Revival, Awesome August services; Aug. 11, Junior Hill; Aug. 18, Fred Luter; Aug. 25, Bill Stafford; 7 p.m.; Mickey Trammel, pastor.
- Pleasant Hill Church, Lincoln County:** Revival, Aug. 10 - 13; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Ricky Cummings, speaker; Ken Adams, music.
- Center Hill Church, Hamilton:** Revival, Aug. 10 - 13; Sun., Sunday School, 9 a.m.; worship, 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Tommy Whaley, speaker; Jasper Butler, music; Terry Edwards, pastor.
- Cedar View Church, Olive Branch:** Homecoming, Aug. 10, 11 a.m., followed by potluck dinner on the grounds and singing, 1:30 p.m.; Richard Hamlet, speaker; Geeslin Brothers, music.
- First Church, Blackhawk:** Revival, Aug. 10 - 13; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by fellowship meal and 7 p.m. nightly; Barry Livingston, speaker; Wilton Neal, music; Rosiland Daves, pianist.
- Crystal Springs Church, Dexter:** Revival, Aug. 10 - 13; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Don Taylor, speaker; Alex Craft, music.
- Big Springs Church, Brookhaven:** Homecoming, Aug. 10, 11 a.m., followed by lunch and gospel music.
- Crossroads Church, Mathiston:** Revival, Aug. 10 - 15; Sun., Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Fri., 7 p.m.; Mike Stowell, pastor and speaker; Terry Veazey and Anita Harris, music.
- Steele Church, Forest:** Revival, Aug. 10 - 13; Sun., 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Danny Lanier, speaker; Reggie Williams, pastor.
- County Line Church, Union:** Revival, Aug. 10 - 14; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon. - Thurs., 7 p.m.; Jim Hill, speaker; Jim Hill family, praise and worship.

VACATION BIBLICAL SCHOOLS

- New Providence Church, Hazlehurst:** June 23 - 27; average attendance, 75; three professions of faith.
- Slayden Church, Slayden:** June 15 - 20; enrollment, 174; six professions of faith; offering, \$855.49; Amy Vaquera, director.
- Shiloh Church, Foxworth:** July 20 - 25; shown are senior adult ladies who participated in VBS.
- First Church, Boyle:** July 20 - 25; average attendance, 107 with 140 total participants; offering for Go Mexico Mission Team, \$731.
- Union Church, Meridian:** July 14 - 18; average attendance, 73; Dennis Ellingburg, pastor; Shalayne Weir, director.



1. New Providence Church



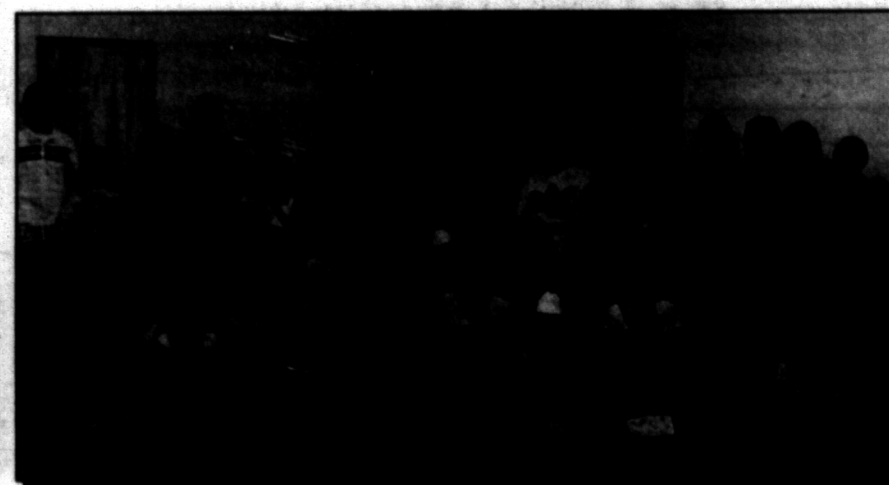
2. Slayden Church



3. Shiloh Church



4. First Church, Boyle



5. Union Church



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2008**

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at **601-948-6262**.

Baptist
for WOMEN

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WHMF XF YPZN HGJ,
HUG RFFO? YPF
GHWNFA ZN UJY
GFHG, DKY NAF-
FOFYP.
WHLM IZQF: YPZLYX-
UZUF

Clue: : M=K

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Six Forty-One

Partial birth abortion ban may still be alive in Va.

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — A federal appeals court has provided hope that Virginia's ban on partial-birth abortion may withstand its scrutiny after all.

The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals has decided the full court will reconsider a May decision by a three-judge panel that the state prohibition on the gruesome late-term abortion procedure is unconstitutional.

On July 28, the court voted 6-4 for the rehearing, according to the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF).

Oral arguments before the court are tentatively set for the period of Oct. 28-31, said Virginia Attorney General Bob McDonnell, who requested the full court hear the case.

A divided, three-judge panel of the Fourth Circuit invalidated the state prohibition on "partial birth infanticide" May 20, saying it went beyond a 2003 federal law and unconstitutionally restricted the right to abortion.

The decision came only 13 months after the U.S. Supreme

Court affirmed the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act, a 2003 federal measure that prohibits an abortion technique that involves the killing of a nearly totally delivered baby.

The same three-judge panel, also in a 2-1 vote, had rejected the Virginia law in 2005.

The U.S. Supreme Court, after its 2007 ruling upholding the federal law by a 5-4 vote, returned the case from the Fourth Circuit to the appeals court for reconsideration in light of its opinion regarding the federal ban. That did not prevent the three-judge panel from striking it down again.

"Virginia has legitimately chosen to protect innocent life from a terrible procedure, and the court is right to revisit the decision against Virginia's law," ADF senior counsel Jordan Lorence said in a written statement. ADF has funded friend-of-the-court briefs in the case.

A partial-birth abortion, also known as dilation and extraction or D&E, as typically performed involves the feet-first delivery of an intact baby until only the head is left in the birth canal. Since the baby's fully-formed head is too large to pass out of the birth canal, the doctor pierces the base of the infant's skull with surgical scissors before inserting a catheter into the opening and suctioning out the brain, which collapses the skull and kills the baby. The technique provides for easier removal of the baby's head.

1. Beulah Church, Lexington, has called Kerry Burrough as pastor effective July 6.
2. Carterville Church, Petal, has called Jeremy Stroo and Chase Coleman as student minister and associate student minister. Shown are pastor Leland Hogan, Stroo, and Coleman.



2. Hogan, Stroo, and Coleman

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For references and more information, call Mike Brooks at 601-420-0174 or 1-800-442-0290.

Wellington Associates, Inc.

SEATS STILL LEFT on these Four - 2008 Tours

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OCTOBER 6-16

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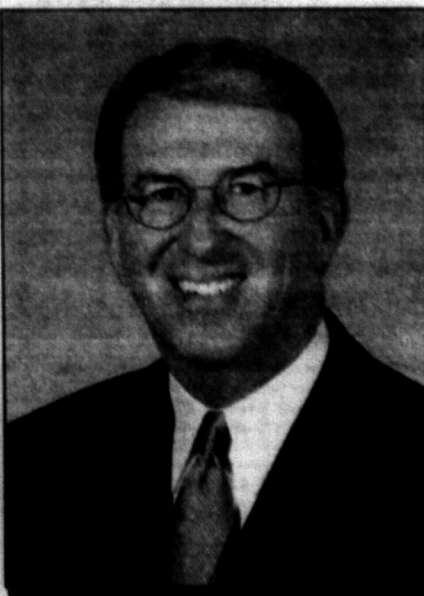
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Opryland Country Christmas Dec. 15-18

Call Soon before Registration Deadlines or Seats Run Out

College News

1. Mississippi College graduate and McComb native J. Randall O'Brien is the new president of Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn. He comes from Baylor University, Waco, Tex., where he served as executive vice-president and provost.



1. O'Brien

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Rose Parade

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Depart Tuesday, December 30, 2008; get away from the colder weather; avoid the post holiday blahs; and enjoy the best "New Year's" you've had in years on this five day tour! Includes **RESERVED GRANDSTAND SEATS AT THE ROSE PARADE**; city tour of Hollywood and Beverly Hills; up close float viewing the day before the parade; baggage handling; and optional sightseeing tours including the *Glory of Christmas at the Crystal Cathedral* in Garden Grove, California; and shopping trip to the Danish Village of Solvang (call one of our friendly travel consultants to explain our day-by-day itinerary)! You'll spend four nights at the deluxe Renaissance Montura Hotel in Los Angeles, and return home Saturday, January 3, 2009. You've seen the parade on TV for years; now see the excitement and hoopla of the most famous parade in America live and up close. The sights and sounds and even the floats' aromas all make being there truly spectacular. Ask to be on the same bus with other Southern Baptists. *Price from \$599 (per person, double occupancy). Plus \$149 taxes, services, & government fees. Airfare is extra, call for prices.

\$100 deposits due!

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BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

A Faithful Life

Hebrews 2:14-3:1, 5-14

By Janice H. Fortenberry

I put my briefcase down in my new office. I was 24 years old and many of the students at the college were my age or older. I was intellectually prepared but I needed two things that could not be learned from any text or from following rigid guidelines: (1) A gift for teaching. Either I had it or I didn't and only time in front of classes would tell; and (2) Guidance from good mentors to encourage me and grow me in my craft.

I had the credentials to teach and they could not be taken away from me. But I was a long way from a mature, masterful instructor.

The book of Hebrews was written to three distinct groups of Jews. First, there were saved Hebrew Christians who were subject to escalating persecution.

They needed encouragement to stay the course and avoid the temptation to fall back on ritualistic laws. Secondly, there were the Jews who were intellectually convinced of Christ being the Messiah but they were personally uncommitted (6:4-6 and 10:26-29). The third group was unbelievers who were attracted by the Gospel but unconvinced of the authenticity of Christ (Chapter 9).

When studying Hebrews, it is imperative to understand the distinctions between these groups to avoid interpretations that conflict with the rest of the Bible especially in regard to the immutability of salvation.

This week's focal passages were directed to the Hebrew Christians. Let's get a historical perspective. The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in early



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70 A.D. by Titus Flavius Vespasian who would go on to become Emperor of the Roman Empire in July of that year until 79 A.D. People in Jerusalem at the time were butchered by the thousands. Those who survived were enslaved, many to toil in the mines of Egypt.

It is believed that Hebrews was written just prior to this series of events, possibly 67-69 A.D. Can you imagine the climate facing the young church? Now couple that with the immaturity of many of the believers and you see why the epistle is primarily a teaching sermon on faith.

Thankfully, we serve a Lord who hasn't overlooked anything, especially resources to help us stay faithful. First, we have a helper (2:14-18). Jesus became a human to provide salvation to us. But because He was a human and was tested and suffered, we can never say we are told what to do without an example.

I would have resented my mentor years ago if he had not been a hard working classroom teacher just like I was. Everything he demanded of me, he demanded of himself. Likewise, we can trust Christ implicitly because he experienced everything that you and I experience but to a greater degree, yet He persevered.

Secondly, we have a heavenly calling (3:1, 5-6). Once we make a profession of faith, we are holy and members of God's household. In these verses, a comparison is made to Moses. While Moses was great, he was a faithful servant and the one through whom God imparted the old covenant of laws and rituals.

Christ, however, is God incarnate and is the New Covenant. He was the ultimate sacrifice once and for all.

Third, we have the word of God to help us stay faithful (3:7-11). Scripture is divinely inspired and is God's voice to you and me throughout all of earthly time. The writer of Hebrews calls back to Psalm 95 to make his point about the urgency of not allowing rebellion to impede our disci-

pleship. The Israelites fell victim to disobedience and wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, long enough for a generation to die out, before they were allowed to enter the Promised Land.

You and I are also subject to the discipline of the Lord and it is through the words of scripture that we hear the small voice of conviction, reproach and re-direction.

Finally, we have fellowship with other believers to keep us faithful (3:12-14). Life is hard and the challenge of remaining faithful is even harder. I would never attempt either journey alone. We should encourage one another and help hold each other accountable but always with a non-judgmental attitude.

I've been teaching now 22 years and have grown from a rookie to a veteran but I've had to remain faithful. So it is with our Christian walk. Salvation is the first step but there are many beyond if we are to experience the joy of a close walk with God.

Fortenberry is a member of First Church, McComb.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Ephesus: Facing Religious People

Lesson Passage: Acts 18:24-19:10

By W. Wayne VanHorn

Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia. Paul probably intended to go to there on his second missionary journey but was dissuaded by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6b). He made a brief visit at the end of that journey (Acts 18:19-20), but finally arrived in Ephesus for an extended ministry on his third missionary journey. The lesson passages show how Priscilla and Aquila helped Apollos and how Paul helped recent converts to understand the Gospel. The goal of this lesson is to help you assist people who have an incomplete understanding of Christianity.

1. Listen to What Others Say (Acts 18:24-28)

Apollos is mentioned for the first time in Scripture in Acts 18:24. He was a Jew from Alexandria, Egypt, who knew the Old Testament Scriptures very well. He was also a gifted preacher, able to persuade people

to his viewpoint. He passionately shared what he knew about Jesus and the Gospel. Apollos gave all that he had to help people find God, but he did not fully understand the whole Gospel.

Priscilla and Aquila, a Christian couple, heard Apollos preaching in the synagogue and realized they could help him understand the Gospel more fully. The Bible does not tell us the nature of Apollos' deficiency in understanding. By stating he knew only the baptism of John, we might conclude that he had something of a pre-Pentecostal understanding of repentance. Perhaps he did not fully understand how God wanted all people, not just Jews, to turn to Jesus in repentance and faith. Perhaps he did not know that God gave the Holy Spirit as the divine assurance of one's salvation. We do know that he sought to go to Corinth in the province of



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Achaia after talking with Priscilla and Aquila. Priscilla and Aquila had enlarged Apollos' understanding of the Gospel and his vision for ministry because he was willing to listen.

2. Ask Others Questions (Acts 19:1-3)

When Paul arrived in Ephesus, he asked the small group of believers there if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed. Paul knew that God confirmed a person's confession of faith as genuine by baptizing them with His Spirit (Eph. 1:13). The twelve believers indicated they knew only John's baptism. The reference is to John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ. John preached a message of repentance toward sins and told people to be looking for the coming Messiah. John's audience symbolized their repentance by being baptized.

However, John clearly distinguished the baptism he administered from the all important baptism Jesus administered. Jesus would baptize true believers in the Holy Spirit, meaning He would put His Spirit within

them. This Spirit baptism is the ultimate authenticating sign of true salvation. When Paul asked whether they had received the Holy Spirit, he actually was asking had God verified their confession of faith. When they said no, Paul told them the deeper truths about Jesus, and they were baptized in His name.

3. Teach What's Needed (Acts 19:4-7)

Paul rectified the situation in Ephesus by telling the twelve believers about the full Gospel of Jesus Christ. He no doubt explained that water baptism outwardly symbolized the spiritual transaction whereby God immersed genuine believers in His Spirit. Once a person receives the Holy Spirit, they are assured that God has granted them salvation. John's ministry and baptism were preliminary and subordinate to the ministry and baptism offered by Jesus.

The twelve believers at Ephesus had heard of John's baptism from Apollos and had committed to what he had told them. Paul then came and taught them what was needed to experience the fullness of Christ. These believers were

baptized in Jesus' name, meaning they made a full commitment to live their lives for Jesus. They also received the Holy Spirit, meaning God confirmed their confession of faith as genuine. They spoke in tongues, meaning they could communicate the Gospel in foreign languages, the same empowerment the Jewish Christians received at Pentecost (Acts 2:4-11). Finally, they prophesied, meaning they spoke the Gospel message in their own dialect.

4. Seek Opportunities to Help (Acts 19:8-10)

Paul spent an additional three months in the synagogue speaking about God's kingdom before opposition forced him to withdraw to the hall of Tyrannus, where he taught and preached another two years. Paul stayed longer in Ephesus than in any other place. The result was that "all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord" (Acts 19:10b).

VanHorn is dean of the School of Christian Studies & the Arts at Mississippi College and a member of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will

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Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

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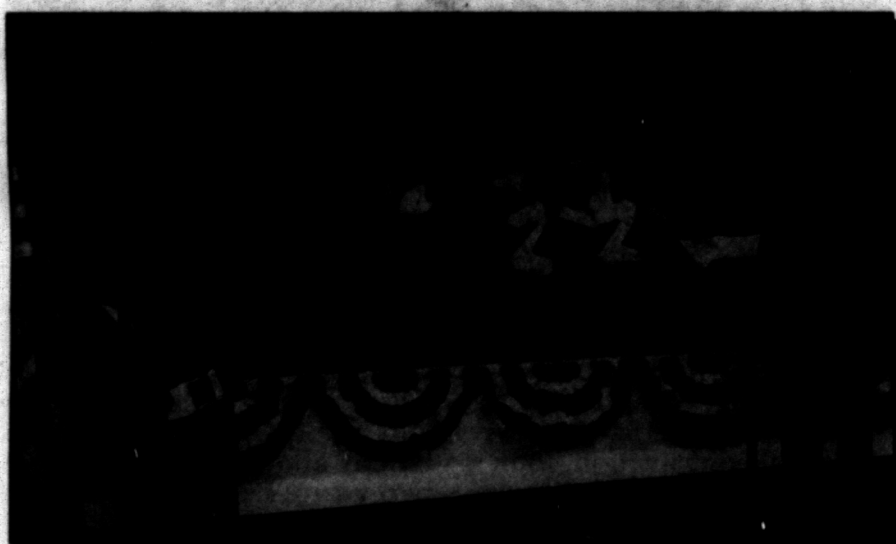
THE BAPTIST
Record



1. Liberty Church, Noxapater



2. Lifesong Church, Florence



3. Slayden Church, Lamar



4. First Church, Runnelstown

1. Members of Liberty Church, Noxapater, participated in a weekend mission trip July 18 - 19 to work on construction of The Mission of the Cross, a mission project of Hellfighters Christian Ministries. Shown are the participants.

2. Lifesong Community Church, Florence, honored their children's church after completing their first evaluation series classes by holding a round-up at the Flying B Ranch. Shown are some of the participants.

3. The sanctuary choir of Slayden Church, Lamar recently presented Land of the Free. Shown are the participants.

4. First Church, Runnelstown recently held a deacon ordination service for Brent Stansell (front left) and Ricky Adams (front right). Shown are all the participants.

5. The youth of First Church, Potts Camp, recently participated in a World Changers mission trip to Alaska. Shown are participants Jake Howell, Billy Mitchell, Ashley Harris, Rhagen Hopper, Brittany Tomlinson, Ashton Gandy, Daniel Minor, and Megan Minor.

6. The youth of Goodwater Church, Magee, recently participated in M-Fuge in Mobile, Ala., and Centrifuge in Glorieta, N. Mex. Shown are some of the participants.

7. Cedar View Church, Olive Branch, is hosting The Bluff City Quartet Aug. 16, 6 p.m.

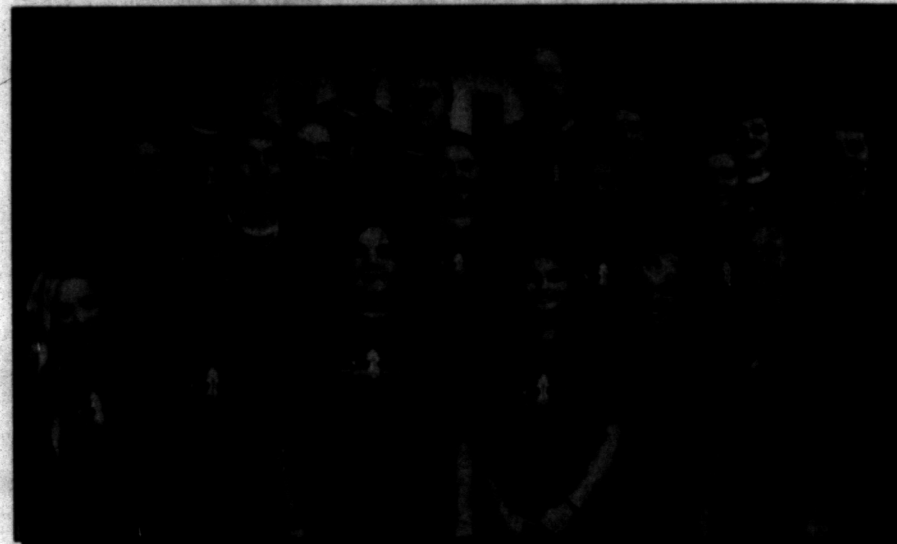
8. The WOM and GAs of Smithville Church, Smithville, sponsored an outreach project, Christmas in August, to collect school supplies for those families in the Smithville area who needed help with their children's school supply list for the next school year. Donations of supplies and \$612 were received from church members.

9. Two young ladies from Clarksdale Church, Clarksdale, have surrendered their lives to the mission field. Shown are Bethany Allen and Melissa Sandlin.

10. A mission team from Boiling Springs, S. Carolina, recently helped break ground at Pleasant Grove Church, North Delta Association for a new building. The team has served in the area for the past eight summers. Shown are Pleasant Grove pastor Randy Barnes, AMD M. C. Johnson, and team leader Cecil Ringer.



5. First Church, Potts Camp



6. Goodwater Church, Magee



9. Allen and Sandlin



10. Groundbreaking, Pleasant Grove Church, Maud